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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam

Top Secret

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11 April 1967

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Information as of 1600
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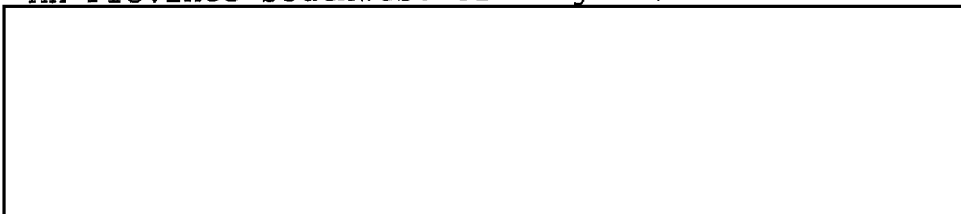
HIGHLIGHTS

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I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:
US 9th Infantry Division Operation ENTERPRISE
continues to register impressive gains in Long
An Province southwest of Saigon (Para. 1).

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II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:
Recent Catholic political activity and an
analysis of past and present relations between
Catholic groups and the government suggest that
Catholic political ranks will remain disunited
(Paras. 1-5).

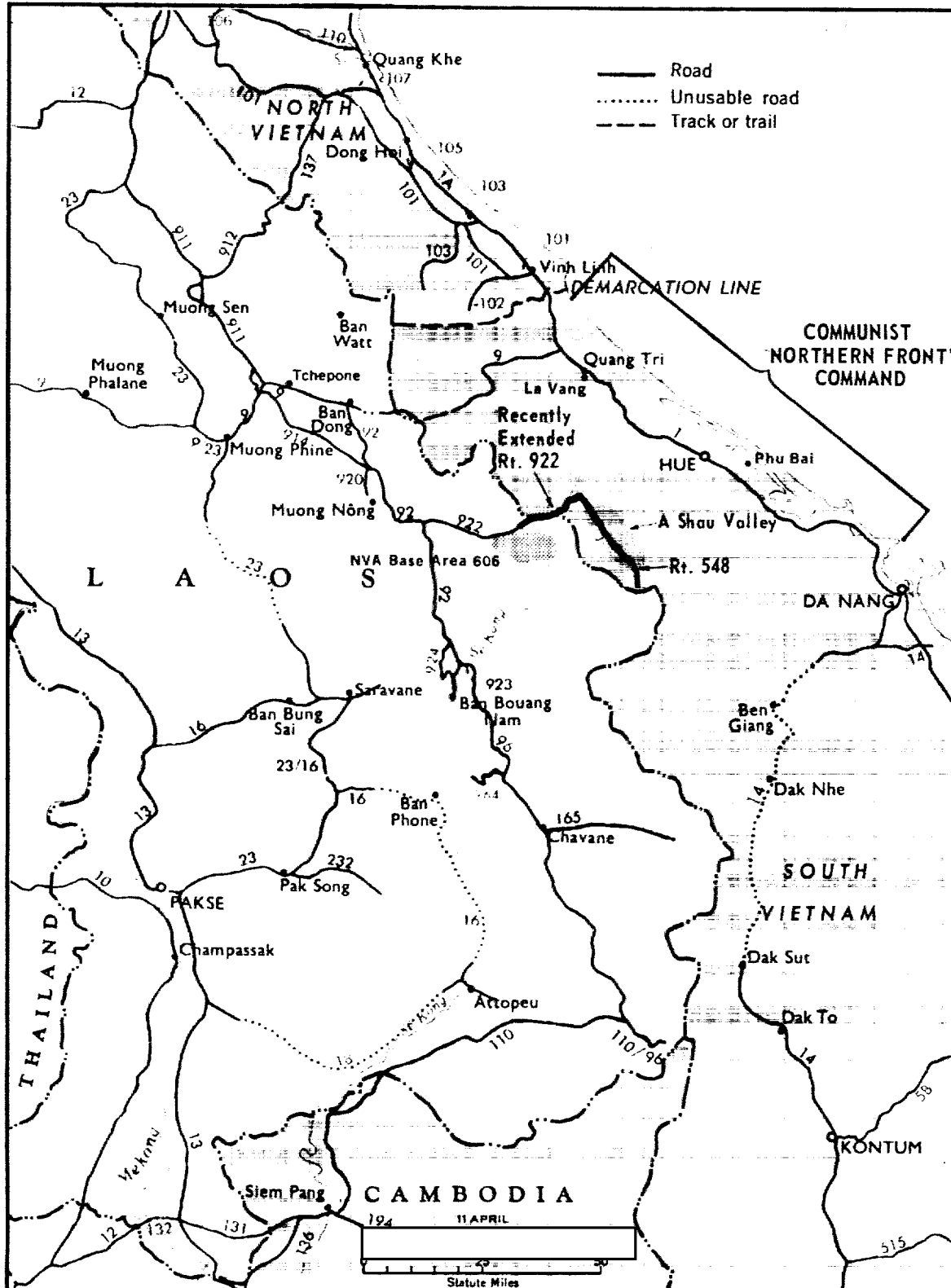
III. Military Developments in North Vietnam:
There is nothing of significance to report.

IV. Other Communist Military Developments:
There is nothing of significance to report.

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. No significant ground actions have been reported in South Vietnam during the past 24 hours with the exception of continuing sporadic contact between elements of the US 9th Infantry Division and battered remnants of the Viet Cong 261st Main Force Battalion 10-15 miles southwest of Saigon in Long An Province (Operation ENTERPRISE). The kill ratio for the past three days of fighting in Operation ENTERPRISE currently exceeds 200 enemy to one US, and is indicative of the success the US 9th Infantry is achieving in this vital delta region.

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6. Captured documents, prisoner/defector interrogations [] indicate that disruption of the GVN's Revolutionary Development program continues to be the enemy's major objective in the Northern Front's area of operations. It is probable that elements of the Northern Front participated in the unusually well-coordinated series of attacks on 5-6 April against US and ARVN positions between Quang Tri city and Hue.

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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

Catholic Politics

1. Divisions within the Catholic community are likely to persist in the coming period of election maneuvering. Recent demonstrations against the constitution were led by Father Tran Du's Catholic Citizens Bloc (CCB) without the participation of the (Catholic) Greater Solidarity Forces. Moreover, it appears to be government policy to encourage an internal split.

2. Father Tran Du's CCB was the foremost Catholic political organization last year through the pre-campaign period for Constituent Assembly elections. However, the bloc's prestige was damaged by the government's refusal to accede to Father Du's demand for the release of Can Lao prisoners--the political elite of the Diem regime--as a price for participation in the elections. As a means of regaining a position of political prominence, the clerical leaders of the CCB have currently seized upon the issue of the deletion of references to the Almighty in the preamble of the constitution to demonstrate the need for greater Catholic vigilance.

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3. While the political demands of the CCB were being rebuffed by the government prior to assembly elections last fall, the Greater Solidarity Forces--a Catholic organization led by laymen--tended to emphasize a lesser role for priests in political affairs. This attitude was encouraged by a special Papal envoy who visited Saigon last fall, and it generally appears to be favored by most Vietnamese Catholics. More recently, Greater Solidarity Force leaders have appeared amenable to an alliance with non-Catholic groups and have taken a more moderate stance than the CCB on the issue of including a reference to the Almighty in the constitution.

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4. The government's relations with these two Catholic groups have generally depended upon immediate political issues and upon a desire to prevent the emergence of a unified Catholic political force capable of challenging the military. Last summer, government elements aided Father Tran Du to form the CCB and later to oust Father Hoang Quynh, who had sided with the Buddhists against the government during the latter stage of the "struggle movement." After the government's initial rejection of CCB requests last August for the release of Can Lao prisoners, the Greater Solidarity Forces apparently enjoyed the government's favor, and reportedly have received some financial support from the government during the past six months.

5. At present, however, there are several indications that the government supported the CCB's demonstrations against the constitution, signifying a shift to cooperation with the CCB once more. In the meantime, the government's relations with the Greater Solidarity Force apparently have cooled. Greater Solidarity Force leaders now appear to be favoring Tran Van Huong for president, although initially they were strong backers of Premier Ky, a fellow northerner.

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III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

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